

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 5-10 and 15-20 are presently active in this case, Claims 5, 9, and 10 having been amended, Claims 1-4 and 11-14 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and Claims 15-20 having been added by way of the present Amendment.

The Applicants note that a copy of the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed on November 13, 2003, was attached to the outstanding Official Action. However, the copy of the IDS filed on November 13, 2003, which was attached to the outstanding Official Action did not include the Examiner's initials next to U.S. Pat. No. 6,181,012 listed as reference "AA." The Applicants respectfully request a copy of the IDS filed on November 13, 2003, with the Examiner's initials next to U.S. Pat. No. 6,181,012 in order to clarify the record with regard to this document.

Claims 6, 7, 9, and 10 were indicated as being objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Applicants note that Claims 6 and 7 are independent claims, and thus are not dependent upon a rejected base claim. Accordingly, Claims 6 and 7 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 9 and 10 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, and therefore Claims 9 and 10 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 5 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Miller et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,740,591). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipatory rejection.

In the Office Action, the Miller et al. reference is indicated as anticipating each of Claims 5 and 8. However, the Applicants note that a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claims is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). As will be demonstrated below, the Miller et al. reference clearly does not meet each and every limitation of the independent Claim 5.

Claim 5 of the present application advantageously recites an interconnect forming method comprising a step of forming a barrier film for metal diffusion on an insulator base, a step of selectively forming a metal seed layer on the barrier film for metal diffusion using an electroless plating process, and a step of selectively forming a metal conductive layer on the metal seed layer using an electroplating process. As noted in the Official Action, the art does not disclose the formation of the seed layer by electroless plating. For example, the Miller et al. reference does not disclose such a feature.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claim 5.

Claim 8 is considered allowable for the reasons advanced for Claim 5 from which it depends. This claim is further considered allowable as it recites other features of the invention that are neither disclosed, taught, nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of Claim 5.

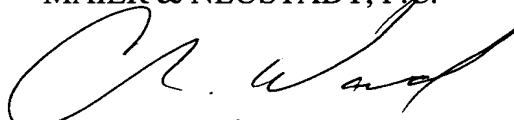
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Newly added Claims 15-20 are considered allowable as being dependent upon allowable claims. Support for Claims 15-20 can be found, for example, in Claims 8-10.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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